

Devotional Studies

Jesus: The Message of Hope

Countless children are taught evolution in school, and, at the same time, they are also informed that God is a forbidden subject within the community school structure. Students are taught that they no longer need religion, especially Christianity, because science has replaced the need for God in one's life. Evolution is the "in" thing. For many individuals today, faith in God belongs to the childhood of humanity and is superseded by science. In spite of this philosophy, one easily recognizes that something is wrong with the world at large. One still witnesses war between nations, strife between races and ethnic religious groups, conflict between classes and political parties, physical and verbal abuse between husband and wife, and so on. Individuals still suffer anxiety, often to the point of despair. With this atheistic viewpoint comes a feeling of senselessness and hopelessness. From this sense of misery, countless individuals—adults and teenagers—commit suicide since they cannot fit themselves into society; they are a people devoid of hope.

Knowledge, in and of itself, leaves one high-and-dry in one's struggles to lift oneself out of the labyrinth, or web, of despair. In the world of sin and death, one observes the human race groaning under the burden of sin and longing for some hitherto undiscovered remedy that will relieve them from utter despair, or desolation. Even though the world is a globe of great knowledge, yet there is something more than information that is needed in order to develop peace in one's own life and freedom from strife in one's own relationship(s) with other individuals or nations. Something besides knowledge is needed in order to introduce harmony, unity, and friendship into human relationships. The thing needed is none other than Jesus the Prince of Peace. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified that is the answer to the sin problem and hope of humanity.

Before one can accept Christ as his or her Savior, one must come to the realization that he or she is a sinner. Everyone stands in need of God's grace. Every individual must come to the conviction that one has gone astray in his or her innermost being; one ought to say, "I am godless, loveless, self-seeking, and God-escaping." To cite Paul, one converted from Judaism to Christianity by Jesus Himself, is appropriate: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (**Romans 3:23**). If one examines himself or herself, one discovers a heart that is self-seeking and self-centered. The heart is more concerned about the pleasures of life than it is about knowing and serving God. Even though some pleasures may be innocent, nevertheless, one must not allow the world to take priority over spiritual things. When one's life is committed to Christ, one must travel lightly, that is to say, one must give up some particular involvement(s) in order to make spiritual participation more revolutionary in one's spiritual commitment to Jesus as

Lord. Once one has become a member of Christ's company, one must be willing to give up some personal freedoms as a soldier of Jesus Christ. One may have to give up some of his or her time and energy for the kingdom of God. Yes, when one becomes a Christian, one must be ready to forsake some of his or her personal freedom. When one accepts Christ, one is now no longer an arbiter, or judge, of his or her own time and energy. God has entered the picture.

What can bring about change in one's attitude toward God and commitment toward spiritual things? It is the message of the Cross. The Gospel alone can go to the very root of one's spiritual ills, and, at the same time, cure the one who submits. The message of the Gospel is not so much about humanity finding God as it is about God finding men and women. God sent Jesus in order to reconcile humanity unto Himself. God took the initiative, not mankind. Jesus came in order to clear the way to God. Men and women cannot save themselves; God comes to the human race in and through Jesus. God assigns no good works to perform to inherit the gift of eternal life; it is a gift from God—a gift accepted by faith, not works. Once one is saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ then this necessitates responsibility on the part of the one saved. The message of salvation does not leave one idle. How can one appropriate the gift of salvation and, at the same time, or simultaneously, live a life in defiance, or rebelliousness, toward God's grace? If every believer would allow himself or herself to be anchored by faith in love, this faith then would transform one into a minister of reconciliation. Have you accepted the message of hope? God invites everyone to share in that glorious kingdom through Jesus. One must allow himself or herself to be changed from a self-seeking path to a God-seeking direction. One's daily walk with God should be as sacred as the public assembly on Sunday mornings. Christian ought not to neglect the gathering of the saints on Sunday to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus and His coming again. Is there unity in your life between the work day(s) and Sunday? Are you made radioactive by the hearing of God's Word? Why not allow yourself to be changed from the self-seeking road to the God-seeking path?